
Greenland has been marking a further step towards independence from Denmark - its ruler for the past 300 years. Ceremonies have been taking place to mark the start of self-rule, approved by voters in a referendum last year. Sean Fanning reports:

Queen Margarethe of Denmark and the prime minister made the long trip from Copenhagen **to attend** the ceremonies in the capital, Nuuk.

(Guns firing)

Cannons were fired out to sea after the raising of Greenland's simple red and white national flag.

Self-rule will mean Greenlanders earn more from the **riches** lying under their melting ice fields and surrounding ocean, including oil, gas, minerals and precious stones, but the large **subsidies provided** by Denmark are expected to be reduced.

(PM speaking in Danish)

The newly elected Prime Minister, Jakob Kuupik Kleist, said **self-rule** was an important achievement for a small community. Greenland, he said, was now **accepted as** a nation alongside others. The local government will take on responsibility for **policing and justice** and the Inuit Greenlandic becomes the official language, but Denmark **keeps control over** defence, foreign and monetary policy.

Sean Fanning, BBC

Vocabulary and definitions

to attend	to be present at, to take part in
cannons were fired	when canons or other guns are fired as a military display of honour for a dignitary or on a special occasion, it is called a salute
self-rule	autonomy - in other words, the ability or right of the citizens of a territory to choose their own government rather than having it imposed from outside (synonym: self-government)
riches	here, valuable natural resources
subsidies provided	additional money given (here, by the government to help the territory to survive and function)
accepted as	looked at and treated as, internationally recognised as, considered to be
policing and justice	maintaining law and order, i.e. controlling the police and overseeing judges and courts
keeps control over	still decides upon and regulates

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8111292.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2009/06/090622_witn_greenland.shtml